

**HAMLIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA GIRLS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 30, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Gracelyn Leiseth** of **Hamlin High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Player of the Year**. Leiseth is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Hamlin High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Leiseth as South Dakota's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Leiseth joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The state's returning Gatorade Girls Track & Field Player of the Year, the 5-foot-11 junior set a state record in the shot put at the Class A state meet this past season. At the time of her selection, Leiseth's winning throw of 52 feet, 6.75 inches ranked No. 1 nationally among girls prep competitors in 2022. She finished second in the discus with a toss of 160-11, which ranked No. 12 in the country.

Leiseth has volunteered as a barista at the Mission Coffeehouse in Brookings, which raises money for service missions both locally and internationally. She has also donated her time as a vacation bible school teacher and with the Special Olympics. "Gracelyn had an incredible track season," said Don Sutera, head coach of Sioux Valley High School. "She is a really neat athlete in that you wouldn't know that she is elite in how she conducts herself. She is really low-key and goes about her business in a professional manner."

Leiseth has maintained a weighted 4.01 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Leiseth joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Track & Field Players of the Year Jasmine Greer (2019-20 & 2018-19, Roosevelt High School), and Shayla Howell (2017-18, Belle Fourche High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Leiseth has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Leiseth is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).